

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT

**Improved Triangle Management In Triangular Meshes
Based On A Tri-Edge Structure**

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ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO. MS1-731US

1 **TECHNICAL FIELD**

2 This invention relates to graphics, and more particularly to improved
3 triangle management in triangular meshes based on a tri-edge structure.

5 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

6 Computer technology is continually advancing, resulting in a continuing
7 stream of computers that are more powerful than their predecessors. One such
8 area of advancement, and one that is of great importance to many designers as
9 well as end users, is that of computer graphics. Computer graphics are used in a
10 wide variety of fields, including entertainment (e.g., games), computer aided
11 design, system modeling, and so forth.

12 Typically, computers manage graphics by manipulating small uniform
13 geographic shapes that often times are triangles. Graphical objects and surfaces
14 are described using groups of these triangles, and the triangles themselves are
15 typically organized as a collection of vertices (i.e., each triangle is represented by
16 a set of three vertices). Such a representation for triangles is well suited to
17 hardware-accelerated rendering. However, such a representation also makes
18 determining triangle and vertex adjacency cumbersome and computationally
19 expensive. For example, given a particular vertex it can be very time-consuming
20 to determine what its edge sharing neighbor vertices are. Determining triangle and
21 vertex adjacency is crucial to many algorithms that deal with surfaces (e.g.,
22 refinement and smoothing algorithms, simplification and level of detail
23 algorithms, etc.), yet the current systems for representing triangles are not well-
24 suited to determining such triangle and vertex adjacency.

1 The invention described below addresses these disadvantages, providing
2 improved structures and processes to manage triangles.

3

4 **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

5 Improved triangle management in triangular meshes based on a tri-edge
6 structure is described herein.

7 According to one aspect, a data structure having two fields is used to store
8 data for each triangle in a triangular mesh. The first field is a set of three vertices
9 for the triangle and the second field is a set of three edges, each edge
10 corresponding to one of the three vertices. Each of the three edges is an
11 identification of a next or subsequent edge that is encountered when performing a
12 traversal (e.g., in a counterclockwise direction) about the corresponding vertex. In
13 one implementation, each vertex in the set of three vertices includes a set of values
14 representing the location of the vertex and an identification of a representative
15 triangle edge corresponding to the vertex.

16 According to another aspect, triangles can be added to the triangular mesh.
17 A triangle to be added to the triangular mesh is identified by a set of three vertices
18 for the triangle. Upon receiving the three vertices, a check is made as to whether
19 any of the edges that will be part of the new triangle already exist in the triangular
20 mesh. If any of these edges already exist, a check is made as to whether
21 connectivity of the mesh needs to be changed to accommodate the new triangle,
22 and such changes are made if necessary. After performing these checks and any
23 necessary connectivity changes are made, additional edges for the triangle are
24 created as needed until two edges of the triangle exist. A third edge is then added
25 to connect the free ends of the existing two edges, completing the triangle.

According to another aspect, triangles can be removed from the triangular mesh. The triangle to be removed is indicated by a triangle identifier. For each vertex of this triangle, a representative edge for the vertex is updated so that the representative edge for the vertex is not an edge of the triangle being removed. Then, for each edge of the triangle, the edge is removed and the connectivity of the other triangles in the triangular mesh is changed as needed so that any other triangle in the mesh having an identification of a next edge that is an edge of the triangle being removed has that identification changed to another edge of the mesh.

According to another aspect, three operators are defined to assist in management of the triangular mesh: a make edge operator, a splice operator, and a swap operator. The make edge operator receives two vertices as inputs and generates two triangles, with the two triangles having adjacent edges between the two vertices. The splice operator receives two edges as inputs and alters connectivity of triangles in the mesh including the edges. The swap operator receives a particular edge of a triangle in the mesh as an input, and returns an opposite diagonal of a quadrilateral corresponding to the input edge. The make edge, splice, and swap operators are selectively invoked to both add triangles to the triangular mesh and remove triangles from the triangular mesh.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings. The same numbers are used throughout the figures to reference like components and/or features.

Fig. 1 illustrates an exemplary graphics management environment.

1 Fig. 2 illustrates an exemplary triangle and its corresponding tri-edges.

2 Fig. 3 illustrates an exemplary structure for storing the data representing a
3 triangular mesh.

4 Fig. 4 illustrates an exemplary set of operators for traversing edges and
5 accessing elements of a mesh.

6 Fig. 5 illustrates an example of two triangles having been created.

7 Fig. 6 illustrates an example of the operation of a splice operator.

8 Fig. 7 illustrates an example of the operation of a swap operator.

9 Fig. 8 illustrates an exemplary process for adding a triangle to a triangular
10 mesh.

11 Figs. 9a and 9b illustrate an exemplary process for checking whether edges
12 of a triangle exist.

13 Fig. 10 illustrates an exemplary process for determining and changing
14 connectivity if needed and recording selected edges.

15 Fig. 11 illustrates an exemplary situation that can be encountered with
16 respect to the process of Fig. 10.

17 Figs. 12a and 12b illustrate an exemplary process for removing a triangle
18 from a triangular mesh.

19 Fig. 13 illustrates an example of splicing in a new edge during the process
20 of Figs. 12a and 12b.

21 Fig. 14 illustrates example results of removing edges of a triangle from a
22 mesh.

23 Fig. 15 illustrates an exemplary computer environment, which can be used
24 to implement the processes described herein.

1 **DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

2 Fig. 1 illustrates an exemplary graphics management environment 100
3 including an application 102, one or more triangular meshes 104, and mesh
4 management modules 106. In one embodiment, meshes 104 are each a set of one
5 or more data structures defining the mesh, and are stored in volatile and/or non-
6 volatile memory. Application 102 represents any of a wide variety of
7 conventional applications, such as games, computer-aided design programs,
8 drawing and other graphics programs, etc. Application 102 generates and
9 manipulates meshes 104 with the assistance of mesh management modules 106.

10 Mesh management modules 106 include an AddTriangle module 108 for
11 adding triangles to a mesh 104, a RemoveTriangle module 110 for removing
12 triangles from a mesh 104, and one or more operator modules 112 that provide
13 various mappings and perform various lower level operations on the triangles in a
14 mesh 104.

15 Each of meshes 104 is a triangular mesh, which is a set or group of
16 triangles that collectively form one or more surfaces when displayed. The
17 surfaces can be of any shape – the "triangular mesh" refers to a mesh made up of
18 triangles rather than the surface described by the mesh having a triangular shape.
19 Each triangle is made up of both a set of vertices and a set of tri-edge structures, as
20 discussed in more detail below. Mesh management modules 106 assist in the
21 managing of adjacency, also described in more detail below.

22 Reference is made herein to homeomorphism. A homeomorphism is a
23 continuous 1-1 mapping between spaces whose inverse is also continuous. A
24 surface, or 2-manifold, is a point set such that every point has a neighborhood that
25 is homeomorphic to a plane.

1 In a triangular mesh, each triangle t is a pair of triples, as follows:

2
$$t = \{\{v_0, v_1, v_2\}, \{e_0, e_1, e_2\}\}$$

3 The first triple is a set of three vertices, referred to as a 2-simplex. Each one of the
4 vertices v is a pair as follows:

5
$$v = \{\{x, y\}, r\}$$

6 The value $\{x, y\}$ is a tuple of scalar values, such as point coordinates, a normal
7 vector, and so forth, and r is a representative edge (this can be any edge that
8 begins at the vertex v).

9 The second triple in a triangle t is a tri-edge structure including three edges,
10 each edge being a pair as follows:

11
$$e = \{t, i\}$$

12 where t is the triangle that the edge belongs to, and i is an index value indicating
13 the position of the edge in the triangle t . The position index i is an element of the
14 set $\{0, 1, 2\}$ and mathematical operations described herein involving the position
15 index i are taken modulo 3. The edges of a tri-edge structure are not the edges of
16 the associated 2-simplex. Rather, each edge e_i is the next edge that would be
17 encountered in a counter-clockwise traversal from the associated 2-simplex
18 (beginning at the edge of the 2-simplex connecting the vertices v_i and v_{i-1}) about
19 the vertex v_i .

20 In an alternative embodiment, an additional "flip" field f is added to each
21 edge, making it a triple rather than a pair (e.g., $\{t, i, f\}$). The flip field is a binary
22 field to enable the representation of non-orientable manifolds. If the value in the
23 flip field is changed, the edges can be viewed as being in the opposite direction
24 (e.g., as if the mesh were being viewed from the opposite side).

1 Fig. 2 illustrates an exemplary triangle and its corresponding tri-edges. A
2 triangle t_k is illustrated as including an edge $e = \{t, i\}$. As used herein, edges point
3 from a vertex v_i (the origin) to a vertex v_{i-1} (the destination). The tri-edges for
4 triangle t_k are also illustrated, with the three edges in the tri-edge structure being
5 identified as e_i , e_{i-1} , and e_{i+1} . The edge e_i (an edge of triangle t_x) is the next edge
6 that would be encountered in a counter-clockwise traversal from edge e about the
7 vertex v_i . Similarly, the edge e_{i-1} (an edge of triangle t_y) is the next edge that
8 would be encountered in a counter-clockwise traversal from the edge of triangle t_k
9 connecting vertices v_{i-1} and v_{i+1} about the vertex v_{i-1} , and the edge e_{i+1} (an edge of
10 triangle t_z) is the next edge that would be encountered in a counter-clockwise
11 traversal from the edge of triangle t_k connecting vertices v_{i+1} and v_i about the
12 vertex v_{i+1} .

13 A special boundary vertex v_∞ (also referred to as v_{inf}) is used for triangles
14 that are on the boundary of the mesh. The boundary of the mesh refers to areas
15 where the surface being described by the mesh ends, and can be in the interior or
16 at the periphery of the surface. For example, triangles adjacent a hole cut in the
17 surface are boundary triangles. Triangles that are not where the mesh ends are
18 referred to as interior triangles. Some surfaces may not have any boundary
19 triangles (e.g., a sphere), although since such surfaces are typically created
20 triangle-by-triangle, such surfaces will have boundary triangles during their
21 creation. Any triangle that is at the boundary of a mesh has a vertex of v_∞ –
22 triangles that are on the interior of the mesh do not have any vertex of v_∞ . In one
23 implementation, the value of v_∞ is a reserved value that a vertex typically does not
24 have (e.g., the hexadecimal value ffffffff).

1 Fig. 3 illustrates an exemplary structure 120 for storing the data
2 representing a triangular mesh. The data is stored in three portions or lists: a
3 vertex list 122, a simplex list 124, and a tri-edge list 126. Vertex list 122 is a list
4 of vertices v in the mesh. Simplex list 124 is a list of 2-simplexes in the mesh,
5 with each entry in simplex list 124 identifying one of three vertices of the 2-
6 simplex. In the illustrated example, each entry in simplex list 124 includes three
7 pointers to three vertices in vertex list 122.

8 Tri-edge list 126 is a list of tri-edges. Each entry in list 126 is a tri-edge for
9 a particular triangle, including three references to $\{t, i\}$ pairs. The reference to the
10 triangle (t) is a pointer to one of the 2-simplexes in list 124, and the position index
11 (i) is the numerical value for the position index. A triangle 128 in the mesh
12 includes two references – a reference to one of the 2-simplexes in simplex list 124,
13 and a reference to one of the tri-edges in tri-edge list 126.

14 The structure 120 is merely an exemplary structure for maintaining the data
15 representing the triangular meshes. Alternatively, any of a wide variety of other
16 structures may be used. For example, simplex list 124 may include the actual
17 values for the vertices rather than pointers to entries in vertex list 122. By way of
18 another example, other structures besides the vertex list, simplex list, and tri-edge
19 list may be used.

20 Various operators (e.g., operator modules 112 of Fig. 1) are defined and
21 used for traversing edges and accessing elements of a mesh. Fig. 4 illustrates an
22 exemplary set of such operators. These operators are described with reference to
23 an edge e of the triangle t_x having a position index i . A first set of these operators
24 match edges to edges, and are referred to as: $\text{rot}(e)$, $\text{rot}^{-1}(e)$, $\text{onext}(e)$,
25 and $\text{oprev}(e)$.

1 The rotate or $\text{rot}(e)$ operator maps to the next edge in the triangle t_x in the
2 counterclockwise direction, and is defined as follows:

3 $\text{rot}(e) = \{t_x, i+1\}$

4 The inverse rotate or $\text{rot}^{-1}(e)$ operator maps to the next edge in the triangle
5 t_x in the clockwise direction (which is equivalent to twice rotating to the next edge
6 in the counterclockwise direction), and is defined as follows:

7 $\text{rot}^{-1}(e) = \text{rot}(\text{rot}(e))$

8 The next edge or $\text{onext}(e)$ operator maps to the next edge (also referred to
9 as the subsequent edge) from edge e when rotating about the vertex v_i in the
10 counterclockwise direction. The $\text{onext}(e)$ operator is defined as follows:

11 $\text{onext}(e) = \text{tri-edge } e_i \text{ of triangle } t_x$

12 The previous edge or $\text{oprev}(e)$ operator maps to the next edge in the next
13 triangle when rotating about the vertex v_i in the clockwise direction. The $\text{oprev}(e)$
14 operator is defined as follows:

15 $\text{oprev}(e) = \text{rot}(\text{onext}(\text{rot}(e)))$

16 The same or $\text{sym}(e)$ operator maps to the edge of another triangle that
17 shares the same vertices as edge e (although the edge is in the opposite direction of
18 edge e), and is defined as follows:

19 $\text{sym}(e) = \text{rot}(\text{onext}(e))$

20 Another set of these operators maps edges to vertices. These edge to vertex
21 mapping operators are referred to as: $\text{org}(e)$, $\text{dest}(e)$, $\text{right}(e)$, and $\text{left}(e)$.

22 The origin or $\text{org}(e)$ operator maps to the vertex that is the origin of the
23 edge e , and is defined as follows:

24 $\text{org}(e) = \text{vertex } i \text{ of triangle } t_x$

1 The destination or $\text{dest}(e)$ operator maps to the vertex that is the destination
2 of the edge e , and is defined as follows:

3
$$\text{dest}(e) = \text{org}(\text{rot}^{-1}(e))$$

4 The right(e) operator maps to the other vertex of the edge of triangle t_x that
5 shares vertex i with edge e , and is defined as follows:

6
$$\text{right}(e) = \text{org}(\text{rot}(e))$$

7 The left(e) operator maps to the vertex that is the destination of the next
8 edge from edge e when rotating about the vertex v_i in the counter-clockwise
9 direction, and is defined as follows:

10
$$\text{left}(e) = \text{dest}(\text{onext}(e))$$

11 Another set of these operators perform other useful operations, and are
12 referred to as: $\text{getRep}(v)$, $\text{setRep}(v,e)$, $\text{setOrg}(e,v)$, and $\text{setOnext}(a,b)$.

13 The get representative edge or $\text{getRep}(v)$ operator maps to the
14 representative edge (r) of the vertex v . The set representative edge or $\text{setRep}(v,e)$
15 operator sets the representative edge (r) of the vertex v to the edge e . The set
16 origin or $\text{setOrg}(e,v)$ operator sets the vertex i of the edge e (connecting vertex v_i
17 to vertex v_{i-1}) to v . The set next edge or $\text{setOnext}(a,b)$ operator sets the tri-edge a
18 to b .

19 Three additional operators are also defined to manipulate triangles in the
20 mesh. These three operators are: $\text{MakeEdge}(v_0,v_1)$, $\text{Splice}(a,b)$, and $\text{Swap}(e)$.

21 The $\text{MakeEdge}(v_0,v_1)$ operator constructs a mesh T of two triangles a and b ,
22 and returns an edge of the triangle a . An exemplary implementation of the
23 $\text{MakeEdge}(v_0,v_1)$ operator is shown in the following pseudo-code:

```

1   MakeEdge( $v_0, v_1$ )
2   {
3       a  $\leftarrow \{\{v_1, v_0, v_\infty\}, \{\{b, 1\}, \{b, 0\}, \{b, 2\}\}\}$ ;
4       b  $\leftarrow \{\{v_0, v_1, v_\infty\}, \{\{a, 1\}, \{a, 0\}, \{a, 2\}\}\}$ ;
5       insert  $a$  and  $b$  into mesh  $T$ ;
6       return  $\{a, 1\}$ ;
7   }
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The two triangles created by the $\text{MakeEdge}(v_0, v_1)$ operator are illustrated in Fig. 5. The $\text{MakeEdge}(v_0, v_1)$ operator creates two triangles a and b having adjacent edges between vertex 140 (v_0) and vertex 142 (v_1). Additionally, each of the two triangles a and b share a vertex 144 (v_∞). Although vertex 144 (v_∞) is a common vertex, it has been shown twice due to the limitations of illustrating the triangles on the two-dimensional nature surface of the drawing page. The vertex v_∞ is the special boundary vertex, so the triangle edges are illustrated with dashed lines.

The $\text{Splice}(a, b)$ operator receives as input a pair of edges a and b and rearranges the edge links within the associated triangles so as to re-identify the edge pairs. The $\text{Splice}(a, b)$ operator alters the connectivity of the mesh, changing the tri-edge structures for the triangles involved. An exemplary implementation of the $\text{Splice}(a, b)$ operator is shown in the following pseudo-code:

```

18   Splice( $a, b$ )
19   {
20       a'  $\leftarrow \text{onext}(a)$ ;
21       b'  $\leftarrow \text{onext}(b)$ ;
22        $\alpha \leftarrow \text{rot}(a')$ ;
23        $\beta \leftarrow \text{rot}(b')$ ;
24        $\alpha' \leftarrow \text{rot}^{-1}(a)$ ;
25        $\beta' \leftarrow \text{rot}^{-1}(b)$ ;
       setOnext( $a, b'$ );
       setOnext( $b, a'$ );
       setOnext( $\alpha, \beta'$ );
       setOnext( $\beta, \alpha'$ );
   }

```

1 The effect of the $\text{Splice}(a,b)$ operator on a pair of simple meshes is
2 illustrated in Fig. 6. Given the pair of edges a and b , the $\text{Splice}(a,b)$ operator
3 alters the connectivity of the mesh as illustrated in Fig. 6. The original
4 connectivity of the mesh is illustrated by the solid curved lines, while the dashed
5 lines indicate new links replacing old links with the same origin. Thus, link 160 is
6 replaced by link 162, link 164 is replaced by link 166, link 168 is replaced by link
7 170, and link 172 is replaced by link 174.

8 In certain embodiments, care should be taken when using the $\text{Splice}(a,b)$
9 operator to ensure that the cycle of triangles about $\text{org}(a)$ and $\text{dest}(b)$ (that is, the
10 triangles encountered when traversing about the vertices $\text{org}(a)$ and $\text{dest}(b)$) do not
11 overlap, and that the cycle of triangles about $\text{dest}(a)$ and $\text{org}(b)$ do not overlap.
12 This can be accomplished at a higher programming level (e.g., by application 102
13 of Fig. 1, which calls the $\text{Splice}(a,b)$ operator), or alternatively additional checks
14 could be added to the beginning of the $\text{Splice}(a,b)$ process to verify that these
15 cycles of triangles do not overlap (and the process not be performed if they do
16 overlap).

17 The $\text{Swap}(e)$ operator sets the input edge e to the opposite diagonal of a
18 quadrilateral and returns this newly set edge. An exemplary implementation of the
19 $\text{Swap}(e)$ operator is shown in the following pseudo-code:

```
20       Swap( $e$ )
21       {
22            $a \leftarrow \text{onext}(e);$ 
23            $b \leftarrow \text{rot}^{-1}(e);$ 
24           setOrg( $a, \text{dest}(b)$ );
25           setOrg( $b, \text{dest}(a)$ );
26           Splice( $a, e$ );
27           Splice( $a, \text{sym}(b)$ );
28           return  $a$ ;
```

1 }

2 The effect of the Swap(e) operator is illustrated in Fig. 7. The edge 190 (e)
3 is the input to the Swap(e) operator. The edge e is then changed and set to be edge
4 192 by the Swap(e) operator.

5 Given the operators and structures defined above, triangles can be added to
6 and removed from a mesh using an AddTriangle process and a RemoveTriangle
7 process, respectively. These processes will be discussed in the following figures.

8 Fig. 8 illustrates an exemplary process for adding a triangle to a triangular
9 mesh. The process of Fig. 8 can be implemented in hardware, software, firmware,
10 or combinations thereof.

11 Initially, a set of three vertices for the triangle to be added are received (act
12 220). A check is then made as to whether any of the three edges for the triangle to
13 be added already exist (act 222). One or more of the three edges may already
14 exist, depending on the vertices for the new triangle and any previous triangles
15 added to the mesh. Based on the edges found, a determination is then made as to
16 whether the connectivity of any of the pre-existing edges needs to be changed (act
17 224). Situations can arise where the triangle to be added cannot be added unless
18 the connectivity of some pre-existing edges are changed, as discussed in more
19 detail below. In such situations, the necessary changes in connectivity are made
20 (act 226).

21 A set of zero or more selected edges is then recorded (act 228). These are
22 edges that will be used to create the new triangle, as discussed in more detail
23 below. The triangle addition process obtains two edges for the new triangle, then
24 adds the third edge to those two edges to form the triangle. If two such edges
25 already exist, then no new edges need to be created. However, if no edges exist,

1 then two edges need to be created, and if only one edge exists, then one new edge
2 needs to be created (act 230). These two edges of the triangle will form a wedge
3 or "V" shape. The free ends of the two edges (i.e., the vertex of each edge that is
4 not shared by the other edge) are then connected with a third edge (act 232).

5 A check is then made as to whether connecting the two edges in act 232
6 resulted in filling a triangle-shaped hole (act 234). If the triangle is being added to
7 fill in a hole in the mesh of the same size as the triangle being added, then
8 additional acts are performed. These additional acts comprise destroying any
9 additional edges that were created during the connecting process of act 234 (act
10 236). For example, use of the MakeEdge operator discussed above may result in
11 having an additional edge (with one vertex that is the boundary vertex) that is not
12 needed. After destroying any such additional edges, or if connecting the two
13 edges did not result in filling a triangle-shaped hole, then a representative edge is
14 set for each vertex of the triangle (act 238), completing the triangle addition
15 process.

16 Figs. 9a and 9b illustrate an exemplary process for checking whether edges
17 of a triangle exist (act 222 of Fig. 8). The process of Figs. 9a and 9b can be
18 implemented in hardware, software, firmware, or combinations thereof. The
19 process of Figs. 9a and 9b is repeated for each of the three vertices received in act
20 220 of Fig. 8 (i.e., the value i ranges from 0 to 2). The process of Figs. 9a and 9b,
21 as well as the process of Fig. 10 below, refers to edges a , b , and c . The edges a , b ,
22 and c are referred to in Figs. 9a, 9b, and 10 are defined as follows: edge a is the
23 edge from vertex v_i to vertex v_{i+1} , edge b is the edge from vertex v_i to vertex v_{i-1} ,
24 and edge c is the edge from vertex v_i to vertex v_∞ .

Initially, the stored representative edge for the vertex v_i is retrieved (act 250), and a check made as to whether the representative edge is the empty set (act 252). If the representative edge is empty (that is, the vertex is an isolated vertex that is not part of any edge in the mesh), then a value g_i is set to be equal to the empty set (act 254), and the process ends for that vertex (act 256).

However, if the representative edge is not empty, then the representative edge is used as a selected edge (act 258) and a variable w is set to be equal to the destination vertex of the selected edge (act 260). A check is then made as to whether there is an edge from w to the vertex v_{i-1} (act 262). If there is such an edge, then a check is made as to whether the vertex to the right in the triangle (e.g., using the right() operator discussed above) is equal to v_∞ (act 264). If the vertex to the right in the triangle is not equal to v_∞ then an error is reported (act 266) and the triangle addition process ends. However, if the vertex to the right in the triangle is equal to v_∞ then the selected edge is set to be edge b for the new triangle (act 268) and a check is made as to whether there are any additional edges to select (act 270 of Fig. 9b). In the illustrated example, selection of additional edges continues until either all edges have been selected or both of the edges a and b have been identified. If there are no additional edges to select then the process ends (act 272); otherwise, another edge is selected (act 274) and processing continues at act 260 with the newly selected edge.

Returning to act 262 in Fig. 9a, if there is not an edge from w to the vertex v_{i-1} then a check is made as to whether there is an edge from w to the vertex v_{i+1} (act 276). If there is such an edge, then a check is made as to whether the vertex to the left in the triangle (e.g., using the left() operator discussed above) is equal to v_∞ (act 278). If the vertex to the left in the triangle is not equal to v_∞ then an error

1 is reported (act 266) and the triangle addition process ends. However, if the vertex
2 to the left in the triangle is equal to v_∞ then the selected edge is set to be edge a for
3 the new triangle (act 280) and a check is made as to whether there are any
4 additional edges to select (act 270 of Fig. 9b).

5 Returning to act 276 of Fig. 9a, if there is not an edge from w to the vertex
6 v_{i+1} then a check is made as to whether the destination of the selected edge is equal
7 to v_∞ (act 282 of Fig. 9b). If the destination of the selected edge is equal to v_∞ then
8 the selected edge is set to be edge c for the new triangle (act 284) and a check is
9 made as to whether there are any additional edges to select (act 270). Returning to
10 act 282, if the destination of the selected edge is no equal to v_∞ then a check is
11 made as to whether there are any additional edges to select (act 270).

12 Fig. 10 illustrates an exemplary process for determining and changing
13 connectivity if needed and recording selected edges (acts 224, 226, and 228 of
14 Fig. 8). The process of Fig. 10 can be implemented in hardware, software,
15 firmware, or combinations thereof. The process of Fig. 10 is repeated for each of
16 the three vertices received in act 220 of Fig. 8.

17 Initially, a check is made as to whether a and b are both not empty (act
18 300). If a and b are both not empty, then a check is made as to whether another
19 triangle(s) exists between a and b (act 302). Fig. 11 illustrates an exemplary
20 situation where another triangle(s) exists between the two edges a and b . As
21 illustrated, the edge 310 (a) and edge 312 (b) are two edges of the triangle to be
22 added to a mesh based on the vertices 314 (v_i), 316 (v_{i-1}), and 318 (v_{i+1}). The
23 triangles existing in a counter-clockwise traversal about vertex 314 (v_i) between
24 line 320 (onext(a)) and line 322 (oprev(b)) are removed prior to completing the
25 triangle addition process.

1 Returning to Fig. 10, if one or more other triangles do exist between a and
2 b (act 334) then connectivity of the triangles is changed so that the triangle(s) no
3 longer exist between a and b (act 336). A value of g_i is then set to be the edge b
4 (act 338) and the process ends for vertex v_i (act 340). Returning to act 334, if one
5 or more other triangles do not exist between a and b , then processing proceeds to
6 act 338 without altering the connectivity of any of the triangles.

7 Returning to act 300, if both a and b are not both not empty (that is, one or
8 both of a and b is empty), then a check is made as to whether just a is not empty
9 and b is empty (act 342). If a is not empty and b is empty, then a value of g_i is set
10 to be the edge $\text{onext}(a)$ (act 344) and the process ends for vertex v_i (act 340).
11 However, if a is empty or b is not empty, then a check is made as to whether b is
12 not empty (act 346). If b is not empty, then a value of g_i is set to be the edge b (act
13 348) and the process ends for vertex v_i (act 340). However, if b is empty, then a
14 check is made as to whether edge c is not empty (act 350). If c is not empty, then a
15 value of g_i is set to be the edge c (act 352) and the process ends for vertex v_i (act
16 340). However, if c is empty, then an error is reported (act 354) and the triangle
17 addition process ends.

18 The following pseudocode is an exemplary implementation for the process
19 of adding a triangle to a mesh. The pseudocode relies on three predicates, which
20 are defined as follows:

21 $\text{bound}(e) = e \text{ is not equal to } \emptyset$

22 $\text{interior}(e) = \text{dest}(e) \text{ is not equal to } v_\infty$

23 $\text{boundary}(e) = \text{dest}(e) \text{ is equal to } v_\infty$

```

1  AddTriangle( $v_0, v_1, v_2$ )
2  {
3      for ( $i \leftarrow 0, \dots, 2$ ) {
4           $e \leftarrow \text{getRep}(v_i)$ ;
5          if ( $\text{bound}(e)$ ) {
6               $a \leftarrow b \leftarrow c \leftarrow \emptyset$ ;
7               $e_0 \leftarrow e$ ;
8              do {
9                   $w \leftarrow \text{dest}(e)$ ;
10                 if ( $w = v_{i-1}$ ) {
11                     if ( $\text{right}(e) \neq v_\infty$ )
12                         Error("invalid edge");
13                      $b \leftarrow e$ ;
14                 }
15                 else if ( $w = v_{i+1}$ ) {
16                     if ( $\text{left}(e) \neq v_\infty$ )
17                         Error("invalid edge");
18                      $a \leftarrow e$ ;
19                 }
20                 else if ( $w = v_\infty$ )  $c \leftarrow e$ ;
21                  $e \leftarrow \text{onext}(e)$ ;
22             } while ( $e \neq e_0$  and not ( $\text{bound}(a)$  and  $\text{bound}(b)$ ));
23
24              $g_i \leftarrow \emptyset$ ;
25             if ( $\text{bound}(a)$ ) {
26                 if ( $\text{bound}(b)$ ) {
27                     if ( $\text{onext}(a) \neq \text{oprev}(b)$ ) {
28                          $e \leftarrow \text{onext}(b)$ ;
29                         while (( $e \neq a$ ) and ( $\text{dest}(e) \neq v_\infty$ ))
30                              $e \leftarrow \text{onext}(e)$ ;
31                         if ( $e = a$ )
32                             Error("non-manifold vertex");
33                          $f \leftarrow \text{oprev}(b)$ ;
34                         Splice( $\text{onext}(a), f$ );
35                         Splice( $e, f$ );
36                     }
37                      $g_i \leftarrow b$ ;
38                 }
39             } else  $g_i \leftarrow \text{onext}(a)$ ;
40         }
41         else if ( $\text{bound}(b)$ )  $g_i \leftarrow b$ ;
42         else if ( $\text{bound}(c)$ )  $g_i \leftarrow c$ ;
43         else Error("non-manifold vertex");
44     }
45 }

```

```

1           }
2
3   i ← 0;
4   repeat {
5     if (not(interior( $g_i$ )) and not(interior( $g_{i-1}$ ))) {
6       e ← MakeEdge( $v_i, v_{i-1}$ );
7       if (boundary( $g_i$ )) Splice(onext(e), $g_i$ );
8       if (boundary( $g_{i-1}$ )) Splice(rot-1(e), $g_{i-1}$ );
9        $g_{i-1} \leftarrow \text{rot}^{-1}(e)$ ;
10       $g_i \leftarrow e$ ;
11    }
12    else if (interior( $g_i$ ) and interior( $g_{i-1}$ )) {
13      Swap(rot-1( $g_i$ ));
14      if (interior( $g_{i+1}$ )) {
15        Splice(rot-1( $g_i$ ), $g_{i+1}$ );
16        DestroyEdge( $g_{i+1}$ );
17      }
18      setRep( $v_i, g_i$ );
19      setRep( $v_{i+1}, \text{rot}(g_i)$ );
20      setRep( $v_{i+2}, \text{rot}^{-1}(g_i)$ );
21      return;
22    }
23    i ← i + 1;
24  }
25

```

Figs. 12a and 12b illustrate an exemplary process for removing a triangle from a triangular mesh. The process of Figs. 12a and 12b can be implemented in hardware, software, firmware, or combinations thereof.

Initially, an identifier of the triangle to be removed is received (act 402). For each vertex in the identified triangle, the representative edge for the vertex is updated to be either an edge that is not part of the identified triangle or the empty set (act 404), so that once removed no vertex will have a representative edge that is an edge of the removed triangle (and thus no longer part of the mesh). Also, for

1 each vertex v_i in the identified triangle a temporary variable (h_i in the illustrated
2 example) is set up holding the value of $\text{oprev}(e_i)$ for the edge (act 406).

3 A check is then made as to whether the identified triangle is completely
4 surrounded by other triangles (act 408). If so, then a new edge is spliced into the
5 mesh having a third vertex of v_∞ (act 410), allowing new triangles to be created
6 (having a vertex at v_∞) as part of the removal process. Fig. 13 illustrates the
7 process in act 410 in more detail. Assume that a triangle is going to be removed
8 from the interior of mesh 420 (a cross-hatch pattern is used in Fig. 13 to identify
9 the triangle to be removed). This will leave a hole in mesh 420 where the triangle
10 was, and so an additional edge is added as illustrated in mesh 422 having a third
11 vertex at v_∞ . This creates the basis for three additional triangles in the hole being
12 left by the triangle being removed, and each of the three additional triangles is a
13 boundary triangle.

14 Returning to Fig. 12a, after splicing in the new edge in act 410, or if the
15 identified triangle is not completely surrounded by other triangles, then one vertex
16 of the identified triangle is selected (act 430). A check is then made as to whether
17 $\text{right}(h_i)$ given the selected vertex equals v_∞ (act 432). If $\text{right}(h_i)$ given the
18 selected vertex does not equal v_∞ then another vertex is selected (act 434), and the
19 check is repeated. Once a vertex is selected such that $\text{right}(h_i)$ equals v_∞ then the
20 Swap operator (discussed above) is used to remove the edge h_i from the mesh (act
21 436). This situation is illustrated in more detail in Fig. 14. The value of $\text{right}(h_i)$
22 where h_i is edge 430 is the vertex 432. By using the Swap operator, the edge 430
23 is removed and replaced with the edge 434 (having a vertex at v_∞).

24 Returning to Fig. 12b, after removing h_i a check is made as to whether
25 $\text{right}(h_{i+1})$ equals v_∞ (act 438). If $\text{right}(h_{i+1})$ equals v_∞ then triangles with the edge

1 h_{i+1} are removed (act 440) and the edge h_{i+1} is destroyed (act 442). Referring to
 2 Fig. 14, the resultant mesh after removing the two triangles that had edge h_{i+1} as
 3 an edge and destroying edge h_{i+1} is mesh 446.

4 Returning again to Fig. 12b, after destroying edge h_{i+1} in act 442 (or if
 5 $\text{right}(h_{i+1})$ does not equal v_∞), then a check is made as to whether $\text{right}(h_{i-1})$ equals
 6 v_∞ (act 448). If $\text{right}(h_{i-1})$ does not equal v_∞ then the removal process ends (act
 7 450). However, if $\text{right}(h_{i-1})$ equals v_∞ then triangles with the edge h_{i-1} are
 8 removed (act 452), the edge h_{i-1} is destroyed (act 454), and the removal process
 9 ends (act 450). Referring to Fig. 14, the resultant mesh after removing the two
 10 triangles that had edge h_{i-1} as an edge and destroying edge h_{i-1} is mesh 456 (just the
 11 three vertices v_i , v_{i-1} , and v_{i+1} .

12 The following pseudocode is an exemplary implementation for the process
 13 of removing a triangle from a mesh.

```

14 RemoveTriangle( $t$ )
15 {
16   for ( $i = 0, \dots, 2$ ) {
17      $e \leftarrow \{t, i\};$ 
18      $h_i \leftarrow \text{oprev}(e);$ 
19      $v_i \leftarrow \text{org}(e);$ 
20     if ( $\text{right}(h_i) = v_\infty$ )
21       if ( $\text{oprev}(h_i) = \text{onext}(e)$ )
22          $\text{setRep}(v_i, \emptyset);$ 
23       else
24          $\text{setRep}(v_i, \text{oprev}(\text{oprev}(h_i)));$ 
25     else
26        $\text{setRep}(v_i, h_i);$ 
27   }
28
29   if (( $\text{right}(h_0) \neq v_\infty$ ) and
30     ( $\text{right}(h_1) \neq v_\infty$ ) and
31     ( $\text{right}(h_2) \neq v_\infty$ )) {
32      $e \leftarrow \text{MakeEdge}(v_0, v_1);$ 
33      $\text{Splice}(h_0, e);$ 
  
```

```

1            $h_0 \leftarrow e;$ 
2       }
3
4    $i \leftarrow \emptyset;$ 
5   repeat {
6     if ( $\text{right}(h_i) = v_\infty$ ) {
7       Swap( $h_i$ );
8       if ( $\text{right}(h_{i+1}) = v_\infty$ ) {
9          $e \leftarrow \text{sym}(h_{i+1});$ 
10        Splice( $\text{oprev}(h_{i+1}), \text{rot}^{-1}(e)$ );
11        Splice( $\text{oprev}(e), \text{onext}(e)$ );
12        DestroyEdge( $h_{i+1}$ );
13      }
14      if ( $\text{right}(h_{i-1}) = v_\infty$ ) {
15         $e \leftarrow \text{sym}(h_{i-1});$ 
16        Splice( $\text{oprev}(h_{i-1}), \text{rot}^{-1}(e)$ );
17        Splice( $\text{oprev}(e), \text{onext}(e)$ );
18        DestroyEdge( $h_{i-1}$ );
19      }
20    }
21    return;
22  }
23   $i \leftarrow i + 1;$ 
24}
25

```

The manifold spaces represented using the structures, operators, and processes described herein exhibit the following characteristics:

- a. The triangle mesh resulting from a series of calls to MakeEdge() and valid calls to Splice() is homeomorphic to a collection of closed, oriented surfaces.
- b. The triangle mesh resulting from a series of calls to AddTriangle() and RemoveTriangle() is homeomorphic to a collection of closed, oriented surfaces such that all vertices are shared by at least three triangles (although an exception to this is that AddTriangle() will allow the creation of a simple mesh component with all three edges shared by a pair of interior triangles).

1 c. The triangle mesh resulting from a series of calls to AddTriangle()
2 and RemoveTriangle() with boundary triangles removed is homeomorphic to a
3 collection of oriented surfaces, possibly with boundary.

4 The structures described herein can be implemented in any of a wide
5 variety of manners. The following are exemplary implementations of the
6 structures using the C++ programming language, although other structures could
7 alternatively be used. The following is the structure definition for a mesh
8 structure:

```
9       struct Mesh  
10      {  
11        Vertex[]    vertices;  
12        Edge[]      representatives;  
13          
14        Triangle[]   triangles;  
15        Triedge[]    triedges  
16          
17        uint32      numVertices;  
18        uint32      numTriangles;  
19        uint32      numInterior;  
20        uint32      numBoundary;  
21        };
```

22 In the Mesh structure definition, "uint32" refers to an unsigned 32-bit
23 integer, "Edge[]" is a set of edge structures (defined below) for the mesh,
24 "Triangle[]" is a set of triangle structures (defined below) for the mesh, and
25 "Triedge[]" is a set of tri-edge structures (defined below) for the mesh. "Vertex[]"
is a set of vertex structures for the mesh, each identifying a vertex in the mesh (the
definition of the vertex structure is system dependent, and thus is not discussed
further herein). Additionally, "numVertices" refers to the total number of vertices
in the mesh, "numInterior" refers to the number of interior triangles in the mesh,
"numBoundary" refers to the number of boundary triangles in the mesh, and

1 "numTriangles" refers to the total number of triangles in the mesh (should be equal
2 to the sum of numInterior and numBoundary).

3 The "Edge[]", "Triangle[]", and "Triedge[]" structures are defined as
4 follows:

```
5 struct Edge
6 {
7     unsigned int t : 30;
8     unsigned int i : 2;
9 }
10
11 struct Triangle
12 {
13     uint32      vert[3];
14 }
15
16 struct Triedge
17 {
18     Edge[]      edge[3];
19 }
```

20 Thus, as can be seen by the definitions, each edge includes a triangle
21 identifier t and a position index i , each triangle contains three vertex structures,
22 and each tri-edge contains three edge structures.

23 Fig. 15 illustrates an exemplary computer environment 500, which can be
24 used to implement the processes described herein. The computer environment 500
25 is only one example of a computing environment and is not intended to suggest
any limitation as to the scope of use or functionality of the computer and network
architectures. Neither should the computer environment 500 be interpreted as

1 having any dependency or requirement relating to any one or combination of
2 components illustrated in the exemplary computer environment 500.

3 Computer environment 500 includes a general-purpose computing device in
4 the form of a computer 502. Computer 502 can be used to implement, for
5 example, environment 100 of Fig. 1. The components of computer 502 can
6 include, but are not limited to, one or more processors or processing units 504, a
7 system memory 506, and a system bus 508 that couples various system
8 components including the processor 504 to the system memory 506.

9 The system bus 508 represents one or more of any of several types of bus
10 structures, including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, an
11 accelerated graphics port, and a processor or local bus using any of a variety of
12 bus architectures. By way of example, such architectures can include an Industry
13 Standard Architecture (ISA) bus, a Micro Channel Architecture (MCA) bus, an
14 Enhanced ISA (EISA) bus, a Video Electronics Standards Association (VESA)
15 local bus, and a Peripheral Component Interconnects (PCI) bus also known as a
16 Mezzanine bus.

17 Computer 502 typically includes a variety of computer readable media.
18 Such media can be any available media that is accessible by computer 502 and
19 includes both volatile and non-volatile media, removable and non-removable
20 media.

21 The system memory 506 includes computer readable media in the form of
22 volatile memory, such as random access memory (RAM) 510, and/or non-volatile
23 memory, such as read only memory (ROM) 512. A basic input/output system
24 (BIOS) 514, containing the basic routines that help to transfer information
25 between elements within computer 502, such as during start-up, is stored in ROM

1 512. RAM 510 typically contains data and/or program modules that are
2 immediately accessible to and/or presently operated on by the processing unit 504.

3 Computer 502 may also include other removable/non-removable,
4 volatile/non-volatile computer storage media. By way of example, Fig. 15
5 illustrates a hard disk drive 516 for reading from and writing to a non-removable,
6 non-volatile magnetic media (not shown), a magnetic disk drive 518 for reading
7 from and writing to a removable, non-volatile magnetic disk 520 (e.g., a "floppy
8 disk"), and an optical disk drive 522 for reading from and/or writing to a
9 removable, non-volatile optical disk 524 such as a CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, or other
10 optical media. The hard disk drive 516, magnetic disk drive 518, and optical disk
11 drive 522 are each connected to the system bus 508 by one or more data media
12 interfaces 526. Alternatively, the hard disk drive 516, magnetic disk drive 518,
13 and optical disk drive 522 can be connected to the system bus 508 by one or more
14 interfaces (not shown).

15 The disk drives and their associated computer-readable media provide non-
16 volatile storage of computer readable instructions, data structures, program
17 modules, and other data for computer 502. Although the example illustrates a hard
18 disk 516, a removable magnetic disk 520, and a removable optical disk 524, it is to
19 be appreciated that other types of computer readable media which can store data
20 that is accessible by a computer, such as magnetic cassettes or other magnetic
21 storage devices, flash memory cards, CD-ROM, digital versatile disks (DVD) or
22 other optical storage, random access memories (RAM), read only memories
23 (ROM), electrically erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM), and
24 the like, can also be utilized to implement the exemplary computing system and
25 environment.

1 Any number of program modules can be stored on the hard disk 516,
2 magnetic disk 520, optical disk 524, ROM 512, and/or RAM 510, including by
3 way of example, an operating system 526, one or more application programs 528,
4 other program modules 530, and program data 532. Each of such operating
5 system 526, one or more application programs 528, other program modules 530,
6 and program data 532 (or some combination thereof) may implement all or part of
7 the resident components that support the distributed file system.

8 A user can enter commands and information into computer 502 via input
9 devices such as a keyboard 534 and a pointing device 536 (e.g., a “mouse”).
10 Other input devices 538 (not shown specifically) may include a microphone,
11 joystick, game pad, satellite dish, serial port, scanner, and/or the like. These and
12 other input devices are connected to the processing unit 504 via input/output
13 interfaces 540 that are coupled to the system bus 508, but may be connected by
14 other interface and bus structures, such as a parallel port, game port, or a universal
15 serial bus (USB).

16 A monitor or other type of display device 542 can also be connected to the
17 system bus 508 via an interface, such as a video adapter 544. In addition to the
18 monitor 542, other output peripheral devices can include components such as
19 speakers (not shown) and a printer 546 which can be connected to computer 502
20 via the input/output interfaces 540.

21 Computer 502 can operate in a networked environment using logical
22 connections to one or more remote computers, such as a remote computing device
23 548. By way of example, the remote computing device 548 can be a personal
24 computer, portable computer, a server, a router, a network computer, a peer device
25 or other common network node, and the like. The remote computing device 548 is

1 illustrated as a portable computer that can include many or all of the elements and
2 features described herein relative to computer 502.

3 Logical connections between computer 502 and the remote computer 548
4 are depicted as a local area network (LAN) 550 and a general wide area network
5 (WAN) 552. Such networking environments are commonplace in offices,
6 enterprise-wide computer networks, intranets, and the Internet.

7 When implemented in a LAN networking environment, the computer 502 is
8 connected to a local network 550 via a network interface or adapter 554. When
9 implemented in a WAN networking environment, the computer 502 typically
10 includes a modem 556 or other means for establishing communications over the
11 wide network 552. The modem 556, which can be internal or external to computer
12 502, can be connected to the system bus 508 via the input/output interfaces 540 or
13 other appropriate mechanisms. It is to be appreciated that the illustrated network
14 connections are exemplary and that other means of establishing communication
15 link(s) between the computers 502 and 548 can be employed.

16 In a networked environment, such as that illustrated with computing
17 environment 500, program modules depicted relative to the computer 502, or
18 portions thereof, may be stored in a remote memory storage device. By way of
19 example, remote application programs 558 reside on a memory device of remote
20 computer 548. For purposes of illustration, application programs and other
21 executable program components such as the operating system are illustrated herein
22 as discrete blocks, although it is recognized that such programs and components
23 reside at various times in different storage components of the computing device
24 502, and are executed by the data processor(s) of the computer.
25

1 Computer 502 typically includes at least some form of computer readable
2 media. Computer readable media can be any available media that can be accessed
3 by computer 502. By way of example, and not limitation, computer readable
4 media may comprise computer storage media and communication media.
5 Computer storage media includes volatile and nonvolatile, removable and non-
6 removable media implemented in any method or technology for storage of
7 information such as computer readable instructions, data structures, program
8 modules or other data. Computer storage media includes, but is not limited to,
9 RAM, ROM, EEPROM, flash memory or other memory technology, CD-ROM,
10 digital versatile disks (DVD) or other optical storage, magnetic cassettes, magnetic
11 tape, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other media
12 which can be used to store the desired information and which can be accessed by
13 computer 502. Communication media typically embodies computer readable
14 instructions, data structures, program modules or other data in a modulated data
15 signal such as a carrier wave or other transport mechanism and includes any
16 information delivery media. The term "modulated data signal" means a signal that
17 has one or more of its characteristics set or changed in such a manner as to encode
18 information in the signal. By way of example, and not limitation, communication
19 media includes wired media such as wired network or direct-wired connection,
20 and wireless media such as acoustic, RF, infrared and other wireless media.
21 Combinations of any of the above should also be included within the scope of
22 computer readable media.

23 The invention has been described herein in part in the general context of
24 computer-executable instructions, such as program modules, executed by one or
25 more computers or other devices. Generally, program modules include routines,

1 programs, objects, components, data structures, etc. that perform particular tasks
2 or implement particular abstract data types. Typically the functionality of the
3 program modules may be combined or distributed as desired in various
4 embodiments.

5 For purposes of illustration, programs and other executable program
6 components such as the operating system are illustrated herein as discrete blocks,
7 although it is recognized that such programs and components reside at various
8 times in different storage components of the computer, and are executed by the
9 data processor(s) of the computer.

10 Alternatively, the invention may be implemented in hardware or a
11 combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware. For example, one or more
12 application specific integrated circuits (ASICs) could be designed or programmed
13 to carry out the invention.

14 The discussions herein describe various operators and exemplary
15 implementations that are specific to certain directions. In alternate embodiments,
16 these directions can be different. For example, the Onext() operator is discussed
17 with reference to counterclockwise traversal about a vertex. Alternatively, the
18 Onext() operator may refer to clockwise traversal about a vertex.

19

20 **Conclusion**

21 Although the description above uses language that is specific to structural
22 features and/or methodological acts, it is to be understood that the invention
23 defined in the appended claims is not limited to the specific features or acts
24 described. Rather, the specific features and acts are disclosed as exemplary forms
25 of implementing the invention.